



JAMES A. NOYES, Director

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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IN REPLY PLEASE
REFER TO FILE: **WM-6**

May 2, 2002

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**SAN GABRIEL AND LOS ANGELES RIVERS
WATERSHED OPEN SPACE PLAN
ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS
3 VOTES**

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

Adopt and sign the enclosed Resolution approving the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers Watershed and Open Space Plan.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

The Watershed and Open Space Plan for the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers as developed by the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) provides a vision, guiding principles, strategies, and opportunities for future development of open space in the watershed areas. The vision is summarized in the words: "restore balance between natural and human systems in the watersheds."

The plan identifies six strategies for implementing open space and watershed enhancements: education, partnerships, funding, multiple-objective planning, management of public lands, and monitoring and assessment. The plan further discusses opportunities within the watersheds upon which the RMC can capitalize. These opportunities are in the areas of land acquisition, connectivity and open space, public access, native plants and wildlife, and water resources.

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The Public Resources Code directs the RMC to prepare the plan to be approved by the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, the Central Basin Water Association, the San Gabriel Valley Watermaster, and a majority of the cities representing a majority of the population in the RMC area.

The plan was approved by the RMC's Board on October 17, 2001. On February 19, 2002, the RMC met its requirement of obtaining plan approval by the majority of the cities representing the majority of the population. The City of Diamond Bar opposed the plan and the City of Industry withdrew its earlier approval. The Central Basin Water Association and San Gabriel Valley Watermaster have indicated that they do not plan to approve the plan. However, they do not oppose the plan either. The Department of Regional Planning has reviewed the plan and concurs that it is consistent with the Los Angeles County General Plan. We are now submitting the plan for adoption by your Board.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

This action meets the County's Strategic Plan Goal of Service Excellence as the plan will provide the public with easy access to quality information needed for watershed management and Organizational Effectiveness due to cross jurisdictional collaboration.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

The plan is expected to bring significant State dollars into the region for open space, environmental education, water quality, and habitat restoration projects. The next potential grant funding opportunities consist of \$15 million in Proposition 12 State park bonds and \$40 million in Proposition 40 State park bonds for multiuse watershed management projects.

There will be no impact to the County's general fund. There is no funding requirement for this approval.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

In October 1999, Governor Davis signed into law Assembly Bill 1355 (Havice) and Senate Bill 216 (Solis) establishing the RMC. The County of Los Angeles and a small portion of Orange County lie within the area of the RMC and are both represented on the RMC governing board.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

The plan is not a “project” within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines 15378(b)(2) and, therefore, is not subject to further environmental review.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)

Approval of this plan would not have a significant negative impact on the current level of services provided by the County of Los Angeles.

CONCLUSION

Upon the adoption of this Resolution, please return a copy to Public Works.

Respectfully submitted,

JAMES A. NOYES
Director of Public Works

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Enc.

cc: Chief Administrative Office
Community Development Commission
County Counsel
Department of Regional Planning
Department of Parks and Recreation
Department of Beaches and Harbors
Rivers and Mountains Conservancy

**RESOLUTION APPROVING
THE SAN GABRIEL AND
LOS ANGELES RIVERS WATERSHED
AND OPEN SPACE PLAN**

WHEREAS, the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Act (Act), Public Resources Code, Division 22.8, commencing at §32600 (Stats. 1998, Ch.788 (AB1355) and Ch. 789 (SB 216)), created the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) to acquire and manage public lands within the Lower Los Angeles River and San Gabriel River watersheds, and to provide open space, low impact recreational and educational uses, water conservation, watershed improvement, wildlife and habitat restoration and protection, and water quality within the territory;

WHEREAS, the territory of the RMC extends across the city boundaries of over sixty (60) cities, as set forth in Section 32603(c)(2)(A), as well as the unincorporated areas of the County of Los Angeles and Orange County adjacent to the San Gabriel River and its tributaries, the Lower Los Angeles River and its tributaries, the San Gabriel Mountains, the Foothill Mountains, the Puente Hills, and the San Jose Hills area including, but not limited to, East Los Angeles;

WHEREAS, the RMC was created, in part, in response to the interest of the Orange County Division of the League of Cities, the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (COG), the San Gabriel Valley COG, and other local public entities, in creating a multijurisdictional agency that would be authorized to acquire land, conduct watershed management, flood control, and recreational projects within the Lower Los Angeles River and San Gabriel River watersheds;

WHEREAS, the RMC Board is composed of voting members who represent the County of Los Angeles, the Orange County Division of the League of California Cities, the Gateway Cities COG, the San Gabriel Valley COG, the San Gabriel Valley Water Association, and the Central Basin Water Association, as well as State agencies, including the Resources Agency, the Environmental Protection Agency, and Department of Finance;

WHEREAS, it was the intent of the State Legislature in creating the RMC that the RMC and member entities would be equal partners in the planning, development, and management of mountain and watershed areas within the RMC's territory and, to that end, the Legislature provides in the Act that member entities shall retain control over their own land use regulations, ordinances, general, and regional plans;

WHEREAS, under the Act, the RMC is subject to all laws, regulations, and general and specific plans of the legislative body of any city or county wherein the RMC proposes to take action;

WHEREAS, nothing in the Act grants the RMC any regulatory or governing authority over any ordinance or regulatory measure adopted by a city, county, or special district that pertains to land use, water rights, or environmental quality;

WHEREAS, Section 32604(d) of the Public Resources Code directs the RMC to prepare a San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Parkway and Open Space Plan (OSP) to be approved by a majority of the cities representing a majority of the population therein, the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, and by the Central Basin Water Association and San Gabriel Valley Watermaster;

WHEREAS, on October 17, 2001, the RMC Board, at the conclusion of its public meeting and review of all the documentary and oral evidence related to the OSP, adopted the OSP (also known as “Common Ground From the Mountains to the Sea: San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers Watershed and Open Space Plan”) and made the following findings: 1) that the OSP complies with all applicable requirements of law; 2) that the OSP is consistent with the purposes of the RMC as set forth in Section 32602 of the Public Resources Code; 3) that the OSP contains all the required elements set forth in Section 32604 (d) (1-4); 4) that the OSP is not a “project” within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (e.g., CEQA Guidelines, §15378(b)(2)); 5) that, alternatively, the OSP, as an activity involving only feasibility or planning studies for further actions, is exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of CEQA review; and 6) that the OSP is a long-range planning guide or interim policy document and does not commit the RMC to follow a definite course of action with respect to any particular aspect of the OSP, nor is it intended to have a legally binding effect on later activities;

WHEREAS, following adoption of the OSP by the RMC Board, the OSP was approved by the majority of cities representing the majority of the population therein pursuant to Section 32604(d) of the Public Resources Code; and

WHEREAS, the OSP has now been presented to the County for its approval.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors hereby:

1. FINDS that the OSP complies with the requirements of Section 32604(d) of the Public Resources Code and includes all the mandatory elements set forth in Section 32604(d)(1-4) of the Public Resources Code;
2. FINDS that the OSP is not a “project” within the meaning of the CEQA (e.g., CEQA Guidelines §15378(b)(2));
3. FINDS that approval of the OSP by the County will not require the County to modify, amend, or revise in any way its specific or general plan, ordinances or regulations,

river master plans, watershed plans or affect in any way the County's regulatory or governing authority over land use or water rights and water related management issues within its jurisdiction;

4. FINDS that approval by the County of the OSP does not constitute agreement with the policies, principles, and statements set forth in the OSP;
5. FINDS that approval by the County of the OSP does not constitute a waiver of the County's regulatory or governing authority over land use, water rights, or environmental issues within its jurisdiction or territory;
6. FINDS that approval by the County of the OSP does not constitute adoption or incorporation of the OSP as part of the County General Plan, specific plan, river master plans, watershed plans, or any ordinance, or regulation of this County;
7. FINDS that the OSP is a long-range planning guide that does not commit the RMC or the County to follow a definite course of action with respect to any aspect of the OSP and that it is not intended to have a legally binding effect on later activities of the RMC or the County;
8. FINDS that the OSP is, in principle, consistent with the Los Angeles County General Plan and with ordinances and regulations that pertain to land use, and environmental quality of this County;
9. APPROVES the OSP as required by Section 32604(d) of the Public Resources Code.

The foregoing Resolution was on the _____ day of _____, 2002, adopted by the Board of Supervisor of the County of Los Angeles and ex-officio of the governing body of all other special assessment and taxing district, agencies, and authorities for which said Board so acts.

VIOLET VARONA-LUKENS
Executive Officer of the
Board of Supervisors of the
County of Los Angeles

By _____
Deputy

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

LLOYD W. PELLMAN
County Counsel

By _____
Deputy